

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

Listing of Claims:

1. **(Previously Presented)** A process for the preparation of an emulsion of silver halide fine grains having a number-average equivalent circle diameter of 100 nm or less and coefficient of variation in equivalent circle diameter of 40% or less, wherein the fine grains are prepared via at least one Ostwald ripening step, and wherein the silver halide fine grains are continuously prepared using a device substantially free of residence portion.

2. **(Original)** The process for the preparation of an emulsion of silver halide fine grains as claimed in Claim 1, wherein one or more Ostwald ripening steps are effected in such a manner that the absolute value of coefficient of variation in equivalent circle diameter of the fine grains shows a drop of at least 5% from before ripening.

3. **(Canceled)**

4. **(Original)** The process for the preparation of an emulsion of silver halide fine grains as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the silver halide fine grains have coefficient of variation in equivalent circle diameter of 20% or less.

5. **(Original)** The process for the preparation of an emulsion of silver halide fine grains as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the silver halide fine grains have a number-average equivalent circle diameter of 40 nm or less.

6. **(Original)** The process for the preparation of an emulsion of silver halide fine grains as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the silver halide fine grains have a percent twinning of 10% or less.

7. **(Original)** A process for the preparation of an emulsion of silver halide tabular grains, wherein at least a part of the growth of the silver halide tabular grains is carried out by charging silver halide fine grains prepared by the method claimed in Claim 1 in the reaction vessel in which the growth of the silver halide tabular grains is effected.

8. **(Original)** The process for the preparation of an emulsion of silver halide tabular grains as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the addition of the fine grains is effected immediately after the preparation thereof.

9. **(Original)** The process for the preparation of an emulsion of silver halide tabular grains as claimed in Claim 7, wherein ultrafiltration is effected in at least a part of the step of preparation of the emulsion of silver halide tabular grains.

10. (New) The process for the preparation of an emulsion of silver halide fine grains of Claim 1, wherein the Ostwald ripening is conducted in a liquid feed pipe with a temperature control.

11. (New) A fine grain preparation device, which comprises:

a mixer for forming fine grains; and

a ripening unit for conducting an Ostwald ripening of the fine grains;

wherein the mixer and the ripening unit are substantially free of a retention zone.

12. (New) The fine grain preparation device of claim 11, wherein said device further comprises:

a heat exchanger; and

a liquid feed pipe for continuous ripening.